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TRUTH ABOUT GREECE

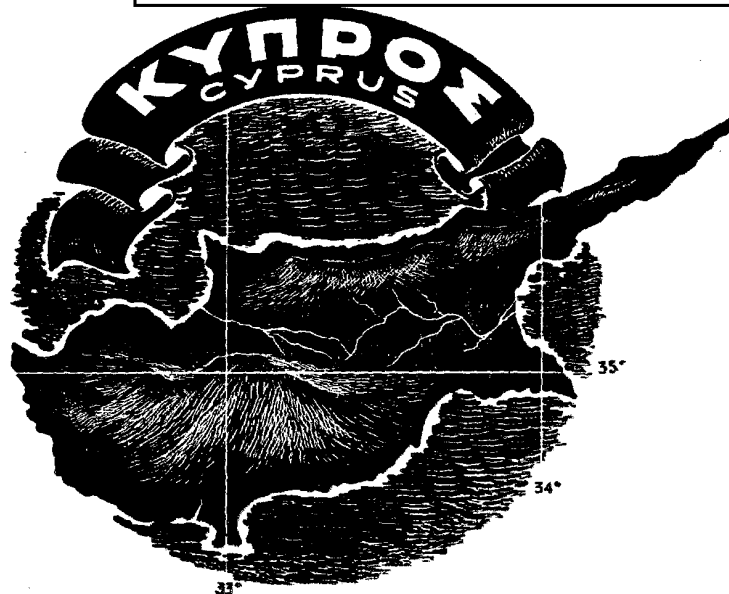
Pamphlet XII

ATHENS

May-June 1950

«Our cause is the cause of all mankind, and we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own.»

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, 1777



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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

A nonprofit organization composed of citizens and affiliated with no government.

ATHENS

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GREECE

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TO THE READER

The subject and intent of the present pamphlet may, at first glance, seem out of focus with the big problems that beset mankind at the present moment.

In reality, however, this seemingly small problem of Cyprus, which may be of no material importance even to the interested Greeks or Britons, is an important moral question, the existence of which gnaws at the very foundations of the cause for which the Western World fights today — namely, the ideals of freedom and justice for the suppressed peoples (point 3 of the Atlantic Charter).

Please read this pamphlet with sympathy and, if possible, use your influence in helping the civilized nations in their effort to win the fight for justice and freedom.

Nothing could defeat the enemy propaganda more in claiming that only imperialistic interests influence the policies of the West.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

August 1950

THE CYPRUS QUESTION

« That they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and that they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.»

The Atlantic Charter (point 3)

During the last two World Wars millions of Britons, Europeans and Americans have given their lives for the principles of freedom and the rights of man. The Greeks lavishly also contributed in human lives for these same principles.*

Have these sacrifices been made in vain? Certainly not, for Indians, Burmese, Lebanese, Syrians, Iraqians, Egyptians, Indonesians, Abyssinians and Jews now breathe the air of freedom. Soon also the Arabs of Libya and the Negroes of Somaliland are expected to gain their freedom in their own sovereign states.

Only the people of a section of an ancient, civilized, glorious nation — the one that has suffered so much in helping to bestow freedom to others — is still being denied their own independence. It concerns the Cypriot Greeks who, after being told by the official representatives of the British Commonwealth that: « to fight in the British Army was in a way the same as to fight for freedom and for Greece », joined the British forces during World War II and fought gallantly by their side.

Cyprus, a Greek island since the days of Homer, continues to remain Greek.

It is only natural that few know much about Cyprus and its

* Human losses during World War II: American 0.6 %, Great Britain 1.16 %, Greece 6.20 %.

people, almost lost, as it is, in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean.

Yet, Cyprus is an island inhabited by a race, akin to the ancient Arcadians, which has ever belonged to the Hellenic World. In the ancient Greek legends it was praised as the birthplace of Venus, the goddess of beauty and love. Venus also, known as Cypris, was born, according to the same legend, from the foam of the waves at the coast of Paphos. It was at Paphos (the western coast of Cyprus) that a famous temple was built after her name, and pilgrims from all Greek countries came to worship in it.

The Cypriots already belonged to the Hellenic Family when the Cypriot King Cinyras presented Agamemnon with the precious thorax (coat of mail) that he wore during the Trojan War, (Homer, Ilias L. 19-28), and when the Cypriot poet Stassinus wrote the «Cyprian Epic Poems» relating to the Greek mythical and historical events of the Trojan War. Cyprus had an integral Greek character and contributed to the creation of Greek civilization with its Cypriot kings like Evagoras and its Cypriot philosophers like Zeno, the Stoic of Citium. Ruins of ancient Greek towns, like Salamis, and theatres like that of Soli (named after Solon, the wise Athenian legislator), and works of Greek-style sculpture and pottery, are still to be seen in Cyprus today.

Later on, during the second stage of Greek civilization — that of Byzantium —, Cyprus also belonged to this new Greek-Christian world and for many centuries had been part of the Greek Byzantine Empire. Hundreds of magnificent old byzantine churches and innumerable old ikons are also to be seen in Cyprus today.

Then, one by one the territories of the Byzantine Empire lost their independence, Cyprus being amongst them. It has since known English, German, Frank, Venetian, Genoan and Turkish domination. When in 1821 the Greek nation rose to break the chains of slavery under the Turks, the blood of the Archbishop and three bishops of Cyprus, as well as that of hundreds of other Cypriots, was shed for Greek independence.

Unfortunately, after that well-known epic and heroic struggle, only a small part of Greece succeeded in gaining its independ-

ence. This first Greek State, however, never ceased considering Cyprus as one of its territories to be liberated at the earliest possible moment. Capodistrias, the first Governor of Greece, on October 30, 1826, in a letter addressed to the Delegates of the Allied Courts, emphasized the fact that Cyprus, Rhodes and many other islands were considered as integral parts of Greece.

Capodistrias acted as he did because — and this must be particularly stressed — he knew that the national conscience of the Cypriots has remained Greek for the last 3000 years, despite the long and multiform foreign domination. During all this time the Cypriots' religion, language, customs and habits remained purely Greek, notwithstanding the distance of the island from the Greek mainland and the desperate attempts of the conquerors to alter these traits.

The Cypriots are as much Greeks today as they were when Kimon the Athenian fell at Citium fighting by their side (449 B.C.); or when their generals stood faithfully by the side of Alexander the Great, or when the Byzantine Emperors dispatched their best soldiers to help the Cypriots defend their island against the attacks of the Saracens.

Cyprus a British Colony.

Whilst, thanks to the unceasing struggles of the Greek people, Greek territories under Turkish yoke became gradually liberated and united to the Greek motherland, and the Cypriots were expecting their turn to come, the British unexpectedly succeeded the Turks in the occupation of their island.

It was in July 1878 that British forces landed at Larnaca, the main port of the island in those days, and the Union Jack was hoisted in place of the Turkish Crescent.

This change came in consequence of the defensive treaty alliance signed between the Sublime Porte and Great Britain on June 4, 1878. According to that treaty Great Britain would occupy the island of Cyprus, while Russia was to hold Batum and the two provinces of Khars and Astrakhan.

Note: The island was turned over to Great Britain by the Sultan in order to enable her to check any further threat by Russia against Turkey.

**Gladstone said: «The way in which Cyprus
has been occupied is shameful.»**

This treaty, which was the feat of the Beaconsfield Cabinet, greatly surprised the diplomatic circles and public opinion of the Continent, and even in Great Britain it became the object of sharp criticism. Gladstone himself, then leader of the opposition, commenting in this connection stated: «The way in which Cyprus has been occupied is shameful.» However, the greater part of the criticism was directed more against the way in which the Sultan had been induced by his English friends to sign such a treaty than against the way in which a Greek population had been disposed of and a new master imposed on them, without their consent.

It was historically and ethnologically clear that what the Turks surrendered to the British was a Greek island. At the time of the treaty, although the Turks had remained in Cyprus as conquerors over 307 years and despite their slaughterings and other cruelties in their attempt to convert the population to Islam, only 22 % of the inhabitants were Turks. The remaining 77 % were purely Greeks. Almost the same proportion still remains to this day.

Gladstone's last wish.

This, undoubtedly, prompted Gladstone, just before his death (March 13, 1897), to state in a letter addressed by him to the Duke of Westminster «that it would be for him a satisfaction to see, before closing his long life, the population of Hellenic Cyprus united by a friendly agreement to their brethren of the Hellenic Kingdom».

Unfulfilled hopes.

The Cypriots, who had shortly before witnessed the courtesy displayed by Great Britain in restituting the Greek Ionian Islands to their motherland, greeted the British occupation of their island as a first step towards their union with Greece. Since then all of the Greek islands under the Turkish yoke have been liberated as a result of the struggles for freedom of the

Greek nation. Even the Dodecanese have been recently liberated from the Italian occupation.

It is, therefore, hard for the Cypriots to believe that what in July 1878 — when the Union Jack, a symbol of freedom, was hoisted on their island — was considered a happy omen, in reality proved to be another check to their aspirations.

For, had Cyprus not changed hands in 1878, she would have been free since 1914, when, as a result of the victorious war against Turkey (1912-1913), Greece succeeded, as already mentioned, to liberate all the Greek islands under the Turkish yoke.

The Cypriots react — the British, however, make their hold stronger.

The reaction of the Cypriots against the British for their union with Greece began ever since the early days of the British occupation. At first the British offered as an excuse for the non-fulfilment of their national aspirations the formal rights of the Sultan over the island. In fact, in accordance with the treaty of 1878, the Sultan retained nominal sovereignty over Cyprus until 1914, when even this nominal obstacle was officially discarded as a result of the defeat of Turkey by the Allies during World War I, when Great Britain annulled the treaty of June 4, 1878, unilaterally. Then the British made their hold on the island even stronger internationally by means of Article 20 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed on July 24, 1923, and by which Turkey was definitely deprived of all its rights over the island of Cyprus. A little later, in March 1925, Cyprus was officially proclaimed a Crown Colony.

Cyprus offered to Greece.

During World War I the idea of self-determination for subjugated people had matured to such an extent that some European countries gained their freedom as a result. This, together with Britain's offer of October 18, 1915, to cede Cyprus to Greece, on condition that Greece abandoned her neutrality at once in favor of the Allies, further rekindled the Cypriots' hopes for emancipation. The Greek Government, however,

considering the entry of Greece into the War premature on military grounds, had to decline the offer, stressing the fact that at the moment neither party could possibly benefit by her entry into the war. Later on, however, when Greece actively sided with the Allies and contributed to their victory, (it was on the Greek front that Germany's defeat began), the British did not consider themselves bound any longer by their offer of 1915.

Mr. Churchill's proposal.

Even before the outbreak of World War I, Mr. Churchill foreseeing the coming storm had sounded Mr. Venizelos (then Prime Minister of Greece), in order to find out if Greece would be willing to grant military facilities in the port of Argostoli, (in the Greek Ionian island of Cefalonia), against the cession of Cyprus.

The Greek Prime Minister's acceptance once more proved the unchangeable feelings of the Greek nation.

Ramsay Macdonald's opinion.

In 1919 the then leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, speaking at a socialist assembly held in Berne declared: «Cyprus is not very useful to us, and the principle of self-determination must be applied there.»

Nothing, however, materialized.

Acts of despair.

Despairing to obtain recognition of their rights the Cypriots intensified their resistance to the point of the well-known national uprising during October 1931, which brought forth before the whole world the CYPRUS QUESTION. This cost the Cypriots a number of casualties, (no Briton being even molested), the banishment of their religious and political leaders, the imprisonment of hundreds of persons and the imposition of fines estimated at many thousands of pounds.

World War II kindles new hopes.

The magnificent stand of the Greek people during the last

World War; the enthusiastic cooperation of the Cypriots and the Greek people, both of whom stood by the side of the British Commonwealth at a time when the world considered their struggle desperate; the Atlantic Charter; the Charter of the United Nations; chapter XI of this Charter, which calls for full respect of the political aspirations of the nations involved; the speeches made by the chiefs of the civilized Christian world; the British Prime Minister's proclamation that no nation would be obliged to remain in the British Commonwealth against its own will, were so many arguments in favor of Cypriot independence.

U. S. point of view.

The hopes of the people of Cyprus reached their climax when it was revealed, in the spring of 1947, that the State Department had distributed to the members of Congress a document dealing with the Greek claims and in which it referred to the question of Cyprus in the following terms:

«We consider the question of Cyprus as one to be settled bilaterally by Greece and the United Kingdom. However, we favor the cession of Cyprus to Greece if such transfer can be made to the satisfaction of the two countries and if due provision is made for the security of legitimate lines of communications in the Eastern Mediterranean and for the protection of the interest of the non-Greek population of the island.»

The Cypriots take the matter in their own hands.

The Cypriots, unwilling to seal their own doom by accepting a new Colonial status which Great Britain offered as a substitute for the UNION WITH GREECE, decided to make their national aspirations known to the whole world in an undisputable way, by holding the well-known plebiscite of January 1950. The Ethnarchy of Cyprus, that is the Archbishop who is considered the leader of the people, asked the Government of Cyprus to give the Cypriots the opportunity of expressing their will through a plebiscite. The Governor refused, and as a conse-

quence the Ethnarchy of Cyprus proceeded with the plebiscite anyway. This was held in the most solemn, quiet and orderly way. British, American, French and other newspaper reporters watched the plebiscite carried out throughout the island and saw the Cypriots in the churches signing the document recording «We want Union with Greece». The participation of the population in the plebiscite was so general that the correspondent of the French Agency wrote: «This is not a plebiscite but a census of the Greek population of Cyprus.»

Indeed, 96% of the Greek population* aged over 18 voted for Union. As the Government officials, teachers and policemen were not allowed to vote, one must conclude that practically the whole of the Greek population, constituting today the 81% of all the inhabitants of the island, voted for Union.

British attitude a mystery.

But what is that which compels Great Britain, the heroic champion of freedom, to deny the fulfilment of the legitimate claims of a people of an unimportant fraction of her mighty Empire?

British attitude helps Soviet propaganda.

No Greek, free or not, is able to fathom the reasons which prompt the British Nation to adopt an attitude so opposed to their principles, and which constitute so effective a propaganda weapon in the hands of those who pretend that imperialism is still all powerful in the Western World.

A lame excuse.

No plausible reason has ever been offered for such an attitude. The British Press keeps silent. Only the London *Times* suggested that Greece had no right to claim an island which had never before belonged to the Greek State. But is that true?

* According to the census of 1946, the population of Cyprus was 449,490; of these 361,373 were Greeks, 80,361 Turks, and 7,756 different small minorities. The Greek element has since slightly increased.

One hundred and twenty years ago, there existed no single Greek State. As a matter of fact never before the Greek Byzantine Empire did there exist one Greek State — except the short-lived one of Alexander the Great — but several Greek States, very often bitterly opposed to each other. What actually existed though was a Greek nation three thousand years old. That nation, by struggling throughout the ages for its lofty ideals, had created the modern Greek State to which have been incorporated some of the historical territories inhabited by Greeks for the last thirty centuries. These territories have been wrenched from enemies who had succeeded to enslave the Greek race but not to conquer their spirit. Honorable exception to this rule were the Ionians Islands, held by the British at the time of Greek independence and which were graciously ceded to Greece in 1863.

Britons and Greeks are old friends.

But the Greek people and the British nation have always been friendly. They have fought side by side in many a tough battle, and they have learned to respect and admire each other. The Cypriots, therefore, believe that the solution of the Cyprus Question through direct negotiations between Greece and Great Britain is not only the most desirable to them but also the most useful for Greek as well as British interests.

The question of Cyprus arises from moral consideration.

Cyprus is not a precious economic possession. Consequently the free Greeks do not expect to increase their wealth by the acquisition of Cyprus, nor do the Cypriots hope to see their way of living bettered by their union with Greece, a poor country herself.

But both resent that a section of one of the most ancient human races, which has bestowed civilization to the rest of the world, is being considered less worthy of freedom than the Negroes of Somaliland. This is a point which any free decent man can understand.

erations.

But what can enhance more her prestige than a chivalrous act proving once more to the world in general that «British virtue» is always dependable?

An appeal.

The Greek people are firmly convinced that if the case of Cyprus was properly laid before the British people, no Briton — except perhaps a few narrow-minded supporters of an obsolete colonial policy — would have voted against the freedom of the Cypriots.

But to enlighten them a strong and highly respected voice is needed. Gladstone, Lloyd George, Ramsay Macdonald, T.P. O'Connor, had they been alive, would have supported the claim of the Cypriots.

But do we not have today Mr. Attlee, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Bevin? Certainly their voices are neither weaker, nor their feelings less liberal or humane, than those of their illustrious predecessors. Repeatedly they have proved deep concern for the welfare of Greece.

Is it then the grave international problems that keep their attention away from a small section of a nation, the freedom of which made Napoleon write on his death bed:

«There is one noble deed left to be achieved in Europe: the liberation of the Greeks.»

Shortly afterwards the Greeks themselves undertook the realization of that job and have almost completed it.

A few Greek territories still remain to be united with their fatherland; among them Cyprus. Except for the latter, these territories are held by enemies of Greece and the British Commonwealth who, moreover, are striving to deprive her of her own independence as well. For their liberation, for which lots of Greek blood has been shed, the Greek people have laid their trust in God.

But as regards Cyprus, are they not entitled to expect that Great Britain will not hesitate any longer to its union with the mother country?

No gesture will be more in line with Great Britain's traditional fair play and sense of justice.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

† **MOST REV. IRENAIOS**, Bishop of Samos, *President* ;

GEORGE OIKONOMOS, Secretary General of the Academy
of Athens, *Vice-President* ;

CONST. KYRIACOPOULOS, Vice-President of the Council of
State, *Vice-President* ;

COL. CONST. MARTINOS, President of Disabled Officers,
Vice-President.

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HEADQUARTERS

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